

Comparing the Novel and the Short Story

Name: _____

Date: _____

The short story and the novel share many elements in common. As a longer and more complex form of fiction, however, the novel provides authors with greater opportunities to create more developed fictional worlds.

The chart below shows some of the similar and different ways that the short story and novel make use of the five most basic elements of fiction.

Short Story	Novel
I. Characters	
1. Usually centers on main character or a small number of central characters 2. Major character usually faces just one central conflict	1a. Allows for a larger number of central characters 1b. Allows for development of minor characters 2. Major characters are more fully developed; they face multiple conflicts over time
II. Setting	
1. Usually features just one main setting	1. Multiple settings allow for contrast between settings 2. Novel length allows more time to develop settings in greater detail 3. Novel length allows more time to show the role that setting—environment—plays in shaping character and action
III. Conflict/Plot	
1. Plot is usually constructed to build to a single climax 2. Plot builds in straight line of rising action to central climax	1a. Multi-levels of characters and action allow for a variety of conflicts 2a. Chapters in novel center on small crises that provide conflict interest while novel slowly builds to final climax. 2b. Chapters allow author to use serial plotting to build suspense 3. Novel plot allows for experimentation with time sequence.
IV. Point of View	
1. Uses a variety of omniscient or limited points of view	1. Can also make use of more complex points of view—such as multiple point of view and stream of consciousness
V. Theme	
1. Usually concentrates on developing a limited number of themes	1. Able to develop a greater number of themes; also able to develop themes more fully over time